

University Avenue Corridor Plan - October 2013
Comments from Tom Hirsch, 14 North Allen Street
3 March 2014

I am a resident of the Regent Neighborhood, formerly within the Historic District. When "down-sizing" we chose not leave the 'hood because we value its community spirit as well as the physical environment, in particular the quality and diversity of the District structures, the density as well as interplay of open spaces, and the proximity to vital City features and the University. While the proposed Plan generally advances these values, there are substantial changes I would like to see before its adoption.

I am also an architect in private practice, and I participated in early housing inventory and area-by-area discussions as well as a number of the community presentations held during plan preparation. I believe that the era's of decline of the Corridor from the 1940-60's and stagnation since the 1968 opening of Campus Drive are over, and there are local as well as City-wide trends that indicate development pressure is present and will continue. To some change brings fear, but I welcome a re-birth of commerce and quality housing that is planned. Such development can benefit both Regent Neighborhood residents, business and non-local patrons, as well the West end development of the University including the hospitals.

- I support the Vision statements found on pages 38-40
- All new development should respect integrity of the adjacent University Heights Historic District which depends on limited height . and also spaces in between them
- I strongly advocate for setbacks at all new development to stop the canyon-like sidewalk experiences that have been inflicted upon us so far. Height trade-offs for greater set-backs is practical.
- Areas 3-2 South side of University Avenue 3 story limits are unrealistic and should be increased to 4 story.
- Area 4 North of University Avenue preservation of primarily rental housing in tiny structures (which are not note-worthy architecturally) should be changed to high density multi-family with mixed use (commercial allowed on ground level), and heights up to 8 stories permitted. (The existing Birge House is a good prototype).

- Parking along University Avenue should be strengthened to promote business customer access and can be done so to allow peak traffic flows (Monroe Street is a good example).
- Area 1 should be changed to allow Mixed Use and up to 5 stories to extend business development potential of the Highland Avenue node.
- Overhead Utility lines interfere with healthy tree canopy development and are unsightly and prone to storm damage. They should be put underground in all new development.

